

NOTICE OF NON-RESPONSIVE AMENDMENT

1. Newly amended claims 1-3, 5-16 and 18-22 are directed to an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed for the following reasons: Invention I, the original claims were directed to a rail component. Invention II, the newly amended claims are directed to a rail component with a post and a plank.
2. Inventions I and II are related as mutually exclusive species in an intermediate-final product relationship. Distinctness is proven for claims in this relationship if the intermediate product is useful to make other than the final product, and the species are patentably distinct (MPEP § 806.05(j)). In the instant case, the intermediate product is deemed to be useful as a gasket and the inventions are deemed patentably distinct because there is nothing of record to show them to be obvious variants.

Since applicant has received an action on the merits for the originally presented invention, this invention has been constructively elected by original presentation for prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 4, 6-10, 12, 13, 15-17 and 19 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. See 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP § 821.03.

3. Therefore, the amendment filed on August 7, 2008 has constructively canceled all claims drawn to the originally elected invention and presenting only claims drawn to a non-elected invention is non-responsive (MPEP § 821.03). The remaining claims are not readable on the elected invention for the reasons given above.

Since the above-mentioned amendment appears to be a *bona fide* attempt to reply, applicant is given a TIME PERIOD of ONE (1) MONTH or THIRTY (30) DAYS, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this notice within which to supply the omission or correction in order to avoid abandonment. EXTENSIONS OF THIS TIME PERIOD UNDER 37 CFR 1.136(a) ARE AVAILABLE.

Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alicia Chevalier whose telephone number is (571) 272-1490. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David R. Sample can be reached on (571) 272-1376. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Alicia Chevalier/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1794
7/9/2009